

## Articulation Agreements

Business and information technology programs have developed independently at various educational levels and at separate educational institutions. This has created a need for coordination and articulation of programs at all levels to eliminate unnecessary duplication and delay in career preparation.

**Articulation** is the planned process within the educational system which facilitates the transition of students between secondary and postsecondary levels of instruction and allows students to move with continuity and without hindrance through levels of the educational process (ACTE, 2004). An articulated program facilitates transition of students from one educational level to another without students experiencing a loss of credit or a need to duplicate parts of a program. Students are able to enhance and broaden their skills and knowledge as they advance through the system.

Vertical articulation refers to the relationships among institutions, programs, courses, or activities. Horizontal articulation includes those relationships between/among programs, courses, or activities which exist at any one educational competency level and will lead to coordinated educational programs for the student. This can be accomplished within the school or community. The following options describe programs in place to grant such credit.

### Advanced Placement/College Level Examination Program

#### Why Take CLEP Tests?

It has been noted that many students do not make use of these credits since they move on to a four-year college rather than a technical college. Currently there are no Advanced Placement (AP) exams in the Business and Information Technology area which do not require additional certifications to teach (Economics and Computer Science). Another option however is the CLEP (College Level Examination Program) tests offered by the College Board. At this time there are five different CLEP tests available in the area of Business and Information Technology: Information Systems and Computer Applications, Principles of Accounting, Principles of Management, Principles of Business Law, and Principles of Marketing.

The College Level Examination Program provides students an opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement through a program of exams in undergraduate college courses. By taking a CLEP exam students can:

- Save time. High school business students can get 4-year college credit for what they already have learned in high school.
- Save money. The cost of a CLEP exam is \$50. This obviously is much less expensive than the cost of tuition.
- Make college more interesting. College freshmen can move right into more advanced courses in their subject major and avoid taking classes that repeat content that was already learned in high school.
- Graduate on time. CLEP can help students get a head start on graduating by coming to college with credits that have already been earned.

## Getting Credit

Not all colleges award the same amount of CLEP credit for individual tests. Furthermore, some colleges place a limit on the total amount of credit a student can earn through CLEP. Other colleges may grant an exemption of a course but no credit towards a degree. For this reason, it is important to get a list of a given institution's academic policies, including its CLEP policies, before taking a test. As part of the institution's academic policies, most colleges publish the required scores for earning CLEP credit.

## Recommendations

Based on the analysis of a taskforce of business and information technology teachers gathered in 2003-2004, a recommendation has been made to view CLEP test options for business students as a great opportunity to earn college credit while attending high school. The two main advantages noted are:

1. Patterning business and information technology courses after CLEP test standards adds credibility, accountability, and importance to the Business Education curriculum. Parents and students believe that they need to take AP courses in high school in order to compete academically at the post-secondary level. Offering courses leading to CLEP test-out credit better positions business and information technology from a marketing standpoint to compete with AP courses for student enrollment.
2. Taking and passing a CLEP test in a business and information technology area allows students to save time and money as they enter college whether they are attending a 2-year or 4-year institution.

## Articulated and Transcribed Credit

### Advantages/Disadvantages of Articulated Credit

The most obvious advantage of earning articulated credit is the savings of time and tuition when a student enters a technical college program. Students who continue their education at the institution where the credits are earned and in a similar program of interest may apply these credits to the credit requirement. One concern is that students who earn articulated credit seldom make use of these credits. This depends on many factors including the program of study a student pursues at a given technical college, whether or not they attend a technical college, and if a student attends a different technical college, whether or not a corresponding class exists. One possible solution to this is transcribed credits.

### Advantages/Disadvantages of Transcribed Credit

With transcribed credit a student pursues virtually the same coursework at a local high school as if they are on the technical college campus. They use the same textbooks as a technical college student taking the course on campus and the technical college must certify the instructor for a transcribed course in order to be permitted to teach the class. In the case of transcribed credit the letter grade that the student earns for the class is the grade that appears on the student's technical college transcript. A passing grade will earn the transcribed credit. Unlike articulated credit, a student who earns transcribed credit may transfer those credits to a four-year college, where accepted.

## Recommendation

As with CLEP testing, articulated/transcripted credit is another option for business students to earn college credit while attending high school. Both articulated credit and transcripted credit allow students to save time and money as they enter college. If they are attending a two-year college in a subject that has courses with articulated credit, earning articulated credit in high school allows the student to enter technical college with credits earned at no cost in high school. Transcripted credit offers the additional advantage of allowing students to earn credits that would transfer to a four-year college in addition to being applicable to a two-year college program.

It should be noted, however, that as with CLEP testing, it is unclear about the relationship between a work-based learning program and articulated/transcripted credit. Articulated/transcripted credit is advantageous to all business students including those earning Business Co-op Skill Certification or Youth Apprenticeship Certification.

## American Council on Education (ACE)

### Background

The American Council on Education (ACE) helps adults obtain academic credit for courses and exams taken outside college and university degree programs. The College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT) analyzes courses and examinations to determine whether they are equivalent to traditional courses taught by accredited colleges.

The recommendation is provided in the form of a transcript. Those schools and organizations that recognize ACE's CREDIT service may grant credit toward a degree or certification at their institution.

### Applications for High School Students

While CREDIT is primarily focused on adult learners who have already graduated from high school, there are two applications that have potential to meet our students' needs:

1. MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist) tests have been evaluated by CREDIT and have earned CREDIT's recommendation for one university credit.
2. CREDIT also reviews apprenticeship programs. DPI could submit our programs to CREDIT for evaluation to determine if it is equivalent to college-level coursework. CREDIT only has four programs currently listed, and none of them are similar to our apprenticeship programs.

### Advantages/Disadvantages

For students attending an institution that recognizes CREDIT's recommendations and subsequently grants credit, this enables students to save time and money by earning college credit while attending high school. While MOS testing has already earned CREDIT's recommendation, unfortunately, there is no guarantee that our apprenticeship programs would meet CREDIT's standards for earning recommendation.

We see the greatest disadvantage in the fact that CREDIT merely offers a "recommendation" to institutions to grant credit. Institutions are not obligated to grant credit, even if the institution is listed as one that recognizes CREDIT's recommendations. Another tremendous disadvantage is the number of educational institutions in Wisconsin listed as recognizing CREDIT's recommendations. Glaring absences include state universities and technical colleges.

**Recommendation**

The American Council on Education 's CREDIT service is another option for business students to earn college credit while attending high school. Due to the services shortcomings, including no guarantees of credits being granted and a failure to include a more significant number of statewide schools, it is unclear of the number of students who can take advantage of this option.

For students who have successfully taken the MOS exams and who plan to attend one of the colleges listed with ACE, they can still take advantage of CREDIT's service without any further involvement from the local school district.